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AUTHOR Pino, Octavio
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ABSTRACT

The social, economic, political and cultural changes brought about by the Cuban Revolution have elicited linguistic changes. Although the Revolution is only fifteen years old, these changes have reached the morphological and semantic components of the language. This paper explains the Russian influence and discusses and classifies "rusonol" examples (mixture of Russian and Spanish). The de-Americanization of Cuban Spanish is treated as a parallel development to the Russification of the language. The article also deals with Spanish neologisms which describe the new social order. (Author/KM)

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THE INFLUENCE OF THE REVOLUTION

ON

CUBAN SPANISH

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by

Octavio Pino
Asst. Professor of
Linguistics and Bilingual Education
Biscayne College
Miami, Florida

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Language is the instrument humans use in thinking. It is also the tool we use to create and perpetuate our culture. When cultures and societies experience revolutionary changes language reflects these changes.

The French Revolution did away with le langage de la noblesse substituting the nobleman's monsieur for the egalitarian citoyen. The Russians reformed their language as a result of the October Revolution. The changes were not limited to the spelling reforms. Established by Decree #804 of the Soviet of the Peoples' Commissars, they went far beyond; a new lexicon was necessary to describe the various concepts foreign to Czarist society, but that constituted an integral part of the new system.

Neologism such as militsia, people's police, komissariat, kolkhoz, sovkhoz, krasno-armeets, chekist, komsomol and soviet, intrinsic to the framework of Soviet society, persist to this very day. The Russians also replaced the bourgeois gospodin and gaspazha with the proletarian grazhdanin and grazhdanka or by the genderless tovarishch (the word for comrade tovarishch may have femenine or masculine gender). Articles have been written about the linguistic wall that divides the

Federal Republic of Germany from the Deutsche Demokratische Republik.[1]

It is the purpose of this study to examine the linguistic changes brought about by the Cuban Revolution in the dialect of Spanish spoken on the island. In so doing we shall not neglect the currents to which Cuba has been exposed since the institution of Socialism in the Caribbean. Nor shall we forget the Soviet experience, for many of the changes that are taking place in Cuba today have already been experienced in the Eurasian massland.

Socialism is now fifteen years old in the island where Columbus introduced Hispanic culture in 1492. This time is too short for any drastic changes in the structure of the phonology of the Cuban dialect that is spoken on the island nation. It is not too brief for a lexical or semantic analysis of the changes that have occurred. Therefore, this study shall deal primarily with lexicographical changes paying special attention to the shift in spheres of influence that Cuba has experienced.

Extensive reading of the Cuban press and monitoring of Cuban radio have shown a decrease of English language influence on the Cuban dialect. Take for example such games as baseball, basketball, volleyball, etc. It was common to refer to a "home-run" or a "two-base hit" in describing the performance

1. A recent reference is Professors Tatjana Gregory and Theodor Langenbruch's paper, "Changes of the German Language in East Germany Under the Influence of Russian," XII South Eastern Conference on Linguistics, Washington, D.C., October 31 - November 2, 1974.

of a virtuoso player. Cuban radio today calls home-runs cuadroangulares, two-base hits dobles, and hits golpes. Pre-revolutionary el basketball is now called el baloncesto; el bolibol (volleyball) is now el balonmano; el futbol is now refered to as el balón-pie. While el beisbol is generally referred to as la pelota. El team is now decidedly el equipó, and innings are referred to as entradas. Even the Germanic term kindergarten introduced to the island by speakers of American English is now translated literally by an affected sounding jardín de infancia.

What does all this signify? A purifying of Cuban Spanish of anglicisms because English is the language of Cuba's first antagonist, the USA, a replacement of these Anglo-Americanisms by their less common Castellian renditions, a linguistic purge resulting in the replacement of Anglo-American semantic calques by the Hispanic terms.

Concurrently with the diminishing Anglo-American influence in the dialect which sounded "Spanglish" in 1959, and still sounds Spanglish in Miami, where Cuban refugees live, there has been an appearance of Russian terms in the press and over the speeches of radio and T.V. announcers. The average Cuban peasant today knows of his Russian koljoziano who lives in a koljoz (koljoz-collective farms, koljoziano, Cuban spelling for worker in a Russian collective farm, from the Russian kolkhoz) similar to his collective farm. They know of Russian sovjozes, dachas (dacha-a Russian country house) and shapkas (a Russian army man's cap). The Ukranian jata (khata -- Cuban spelling jata -- a Ukranian peasant's

thatched house similar to the Cuban bohio) is compared with the Cuban bohio (bohio- Cuban peasant thatched roofed house). La balalaika is as familiar to the Cuban as his Spanish guitar where he sings his guajiro (guajiro - colloquial for Cuban peasant) songs. El komsomol y los komsomoles are recognized terms to refer to the Russian Young Communist League. Even the Russian orthodox el pop (Pop - Russian orthodox church priest) is familiar to the Cuban who compares him with his pre-revolutionary Catholic cura (priest). Even the word samizdat; a Russian term used to describe underground literature has been internalized by the Cuban discident writers who engage in literaty works outside the sanction of the Cuban government. La literatura del samizdat' cubana (from the Russian sam - meaning self and izdat' - to publish) is becoming increasingly popular in the island.

In addition to these Russian borrowings there are Russian lexical calques such as el tractorista, la tractorista from the Russian traktorist to refer to a male tractor operator (el tractorista) or a female tractor operator (la tractorista). La mecanización from the Russian mekhanitsatsja is used to denote the process by which Cuban agriculture is gradually moving into a mecanized system with the recent appearance of Soviet cosechadoras (from the Spanish verb cosechar meaning to thresh; word used to refer to the new Soviet threshers.)

If a Cuban feels ill, he no longer goes to the pre-revolutionary quintas or clínicas for a check up but to el policlínico where a doctor takes care of his illness and administers the necessary medicine. (La quinta - a large privately-owned hospital estate of pre-revolutionary Cuba; la clínica - a privately-owned clinic of pre-revolutionary Cuba now existing as an institution in Miami. In the clínica as well as the quinta medical services are performed for monthly insurance fees. El policlínico is a calque from the Russian poliklinika, a medical dispensary where multi-medical services are rendered to the people free of charge. It is interesting to note that el policlínico changes its gender to masculine from the Russian poliklinika, which is femenine.)

The vocabulary of Cuban Spanish shows today a displacement of Anglo-American influence by Slavic-Russian vlijanie (vlijanie-Russian word for influence). This is the same displacement that has occurred in Cuban society. If one examines the military jargon, the technological vocabulary, the discourses of the Cuban leaders, the standard dialect of the radio and T.V., the journalistic literature, the political literature and translation of Russian works, one can observe that this displacement has occurred rather revolutionarily to accomodate the revolutionary changes in Cuban culture.

Russian calques today outweigh Anglo-American borrowings. Cuba has been isolated from the Anglo-American world for only

15 years yet the short temporal factor has produced drastic changes in Cuban dialectology. Cuba's new contacts with the socialist world and particularly with the USSR have been the source of many neologisms. Cuban students who formerly studied in the USA now study in the USSR and bring with them not only the Soviet technology but the Russian vocabulary they need to express this technology.

But the Russian influence in Cuban Spanish is not limited to vocabulary alone although it is most prevalent in the semantic component. The various governmental organs created by the Cuban Revolution to replace the Ancien Regime show a trace of Russian structural influence in their compounding, abbreviating and contracting. For example, observe how the Russian blend kompartija (Russian abbreviating compound for Communist Party) is formed. It is composed of the first syllable of kommunisticheskaja (Communist) and the word partija (party). Notice how the soviet word kolkhoz comes into existence. It is the result of the combining of the first syllables of kollektivnoe (koll, meaning collective) and khosjajstvo (khoz, meaning farm). Now observe the structural and transformational rules involved in the creation of Mintrans (Ministerio del Transporte, Ministry of Transporation), Minin (Ministerio del Interior, Ministry of Interior), Mincin (Ministerio de Comercio Interior, Ministry of Internal Commerce), Mincex (Ministerio de Comercio Exterior, Ministry of

Foreign Trade), Minfar (Ministerio de la Fuerza Aérea, Air Force Ministry), Minsap (Ministerio de Salud Pública, Ministry of Public Health). In both the Russian and the Cuban neologisms the first syllable of key words are combined to form a free flowing new term: el Minsap, el Minin, el Mincin, el Mincex, el Mintrans, el Minrex (Ministerio de Ralaciones Exteriores, Ministry of Foreign Relations), el Minfar, etc. This contrasts with the pre-revolutionary abbreviation for el Ministerio de Obras Públicas, M.O.P. (Ministery of Public Works). The morphophonemic rules used in forming such blends are analogous to the Russian structural rules in forming komsomol (from the Russian Kommunisticheskij Sojuz Molodezhi, Young Communist League), sovkhoz, or rajsovet.

The following are additional blends with their English equivalents: Mincon, (Ministerio de la Construcción, Ministry of Public Works, pre-revolutionary M.O.P.), Juceplan, (Junta Central de Planificación, Central Planning Board, compare with the Russian Gosplan, Gosudartsbennij Plan, the highest economic planning organ of the Soviet Union), Caricom (Mercado Común del Caribe, Caribbean Common Market).

The Russian taste for compounding has also been transferred to Cuban Spanish. One can note a high incidence of compound nouns and adjectives such as:

(1) competencias deportivo-militares

(2) el marxismo - leninismo

(3) la colaboración científico-técnica

(4) la amistad cubano-soviética

(5) las relaciones paterno-filiales entre los paises socialistas

The influence of the Revolution in the dialect, however, has not been limited to neologisms of Soviet origin or to Soviet structural calques. It was mentioned earlier how the vacuum created by the attack on Anglo-Americanism was partially filled by Hispanic terms and Russian calques. What follows are socially context-bound semantemes introduced in context and presented in opposition to pre-revolutionary equivalents of similar distribution. ¿Quién es el responsable de este colectivo? (Who is the person responsible for the collective?) The above sentence is far from ¿quién es el gerente de esta empresa? Yet gerente (manager) and empresa (private enterprise,) would have been employed in analogous situation before 1959. Empresas have no gerentes (managers) in the new society but responsables for colectivos. Pre-revolutionary señor, a term of bourgeois connotation has presently been replaced by compañero. El compañero es el responsable del colectivo. Compañera is now used in the same distribution as señora. (1) La compañera cederista se ha integrado a la brigada constructora. Three neologisms appear in sentence (1). La brigada (the brigade), a socially acceptable force of voluntary labor composed of brigadistas now in charge of much non-remunerated labor, (free labor for the construction of socialism). There are brigadas de construcción

(construction brigades engaged in the building of multifamilares (apartment buildings reminiscent of the edificios de propiedad horizontal of pre-revolutionary Cuba, condominia for Cuban workers where several families live, thus the term multi-familiares) as well as brigadas for other purposes. Cederista, in sentence (1) refers to a member of the Committee for the Defense of the Revolution from the initials CDR (Comite de Defensa de la Revolución). The third neologism in sentence (1) integración is the process by which one accepts the tenents and ideas of the brigade and participates actively in it. One could be integrado al sistema (literal translation: integrated to the system) meaning that one accepts and participates in the new order.

The term milicia has replaced the bourgeois policia (police). Milicianos and milicianas (miliciamen, milicia women) are in charge of keeping law and order in the Cuban colectivos in urban and rural areas. The terms la policia (the Police) and el policia (the policeman) have disappeared from the Cuban lexicon. Milicia could be a semantic calque from Russian, for militsia is attested having the same meaning form and distribution in the Russian language.

The term pionero (pioneer) does have the same connotation of the Russian pioner. The pioneros and pioneras are the young elementary school children who pioneer in the political learning activities before applying for membership in the UJC (Unión de Jóvenes Comunistas) and the party.

La gente ya no se muda en Cuba pero si permutan casas. (People no longer move in Cuba but exchange houses). Permutar (literal translation: to permutate) is the only way one may move from one flat to another or from one city to another in today's Cuba. Unless one is assigned a new apartment in the multifamiliares, if a person wants to reside in another place he must find an individual who would be willing to exchange his house or flat for his. Tiene que encontrar a alguien con quien permutar.

The educational reforms that have taken place after the Revolution have introduced such concepts as el pre-universitario, la secundaria básica and la escuela en el campo. El pre-universitario (literal translation: pre-university) refers to college preparatory schools formerly called bachilleratos. La secundaria básica (basic secondary education is a new educational institution that has replaced the old escuelas de segunda ensenanza (literal translation: Schools of Secondary Education). In the escuelas en el campo (literal translation: schools in the country) boarding students combine work in the collective farms and sugar cane harvesting with academic activities.

The Revolution has also generated acronyms such as ICAIC- Instituto Cubano de Arte e Industria Cinematografica (Cuban Institute of Art and Cinematographic Industry), ICR - Instituto Cubano de Radiodifusión (Cuban Institute of Broadcasting), INIT - Instituto Cubano de Industria Turística

(Cuban Institute for the Tourist Industry), INRA - Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agraria (National Institute for Agrarian Reform) FMC - Federación de Mujeres Cubanas (Federation of Cuban Women), ANAP-Asociación Nacional de Agricultores Pequeños, (National Association of Small Farms), INRA- Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agraria (National Institute for Agrarian Reform), CUJAE - Cuidad Universitaria José Antonio Echevarria (José Antonio Echevarria University City). These acronyms have not undergone the morphological changes of the blends mentioned before. The Russian influence is not as apparent here for acronyms are not foreign to Spanish structure. However, if one examines what conditions the occurance of acronyms vs. blends, one can not neglect the influence of Russian even in these acronyms. Blending in Cuban Spanish, such as in Mined for Ministerio de Educación (Ministry of Education), is limited to two, at the most three, lexical items. No blend is formed where there are four lexical items involved. Blends with three lexical items are rare. As in Russian, four or more lexical items usually form acronyms. Examples: SSSR, Sojuz Sovietkikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), VKPB, (Vsesojuznoj Kommunisticheskoj Partij Bolshevikov (All Union Communist Party of Bolshevicks), MOPR, Mezhdunarodnaja Organizatsija Pomoshch Revoljutsii (International Organization for the Help of the

Revolution). These acronyms, however, when pronounced tend to form words: El ICAIC (is pronounced [elikajk] and not (el-i-se-a-i-se). That is when syllables can be formed the acronyms are pronounced syllabicly rather than alphabetically. The formation of acronyms as opposed to blending is conditioned both in Russian and Cuban Spanish by the number of syllables in the entire name of the government agency or political institution as well as by the number of lexical items in the appellation. Thus, la Unión de Jóvenes Comunistas (Union of Communist Youth) which contains 10 syllables forms the acronym UJC (pronounced [u-hota-se]). A linguistic universal, namely that of economy in language, appears to govern the creation of blends and acronyms both in Russian and in Cuban Spanish.

Semanticly the official language shows a dichotomy between nouns and adjectives that always have a positive connotation, because they are associated with developments the regime values positively, and nouns and adjectives with negative connotations because they are associated with capitalism or the Ancien Regime. Thus un país industrialista is different from un país capitalista. Canada, a market-economy country that trades extensively with Cuba is not considered a capitalist country but an industrialist country (un país industrialista). Industrialista has a positive connotation as opposed to capitalista an adjective constantly associated with the United States and therefore a term with negative value. The nominalized forms industrialista and capitalista retain the positive and negative

connotations respectively. Compare the-following sentences: (1) Una delegación de industrialistas japoneses llegó a la Habana. (2) Los capitalistas yanqui controlan las economías latinoamericanas. The Japonese who also trade heavely with Cuba are categorized as industrialistas, while the Americans are always refered to as capitalistas.

Because of the epithet imperialismo yanqui the term yankee is used as a derrogatory term to refer to the Americans. Yankee has a negative connotation while norteamericano has a positive one. When the official press refered to President Richard Nixon, it always did so as el presidente yanqui. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who has enjoyed from time to time more respect than the former president is refered to as el secretario de Estado norteamericano. One can tell at a given moment what the state of relations are with the United States by the use of yanqui vs. norteamericano in the Cuban press. George McGovern, for example, is always refered to as el senador norteamericano. The same holds true for the adjectives zionista vis-a-vis israelí. Zionista has always a negative connotation and it is used every time the press wants to criticize the Israeli position. Israelí like norteamericano has a positive connotation.

The same positive-negative dichotomy may be observed with the adjectives socialista and proletario on the one hand and imperialista on the other. Imperialista is always used to describe nouns of negative value in the culture such as agresion in agresión imperialista. Socialista and proletario

always on the other hand are associated with terms of positive value such as legality, moral, and even chivalry. Note the following phrases from the Cuban media: (1) la legalidad socialista (2) la moral socialista (3) la caballerosidad proletaria. Hispanic chivalry is combined with proletarian ethics when workers are encouraged to cultivar la caballerosidad proletaria. The term colonial is commonly used to refer to the governor of Puerto Rico in the epithet el gobernador colonial de Puerto Rico.

Some euphemisms have also been introduced to refer to Cuba, the Soviet Union and the revolutionary struggle. Among these are: (1) la patria de Lenin for the Soviet Union (2) la patria de Martí and Territorio Libre de America to refer to Cuba, (3) la Victoriosa Revolución de Octubre for the Russian Revolution and (4) la gran Guerra Patria for the Second World War. This last one is a translation of the Russian Belikaja Otecheskaja Vioina (the Great War for the Fatherland) the way the Soviets refer to the struggle against Nazi Germany.

Stylisticly speaking there have been also changes. Military vocabulary is used in non-military context. The following phrases from the Cuban press illustrate this development:

(1) Las madres combatientes por la educación

(2) Las brigadas de las madres combatientes

(3) La columna juvenil del centenario

(4) Trinchera de ideas

(5) Trinchera de piedras

(6) El ejército juvenil del trabajo

(7) Montar guardia alerta en la defensa de la lucha por la paz.

Even peace becomes a struggle in la lucha por la paz, where one can find a syntactic calque from the Russian borbe k miru.

The changes presented in this article reflect how Cuban Spanish has been adapted to accommodate the socio-political changes that have taken place in Cuban society since the establishment of Socialism on the island. They substantiate how language reflects people's culture. They also reflect the shift in sphere of influence that Cuba has undergone. They reflect the attempt to create a new society by generating changes in the tool we use to describe it. Do they reflect an attempt to manipulate the thoughts of the "new Cuban man" by reforming the instrument uses in his thinking?